



## Washington 2002 Crop Weather Season Review



**JANUARY:** Western Washington received heavy rainfall throughout the month. Some counties declared a state of emergency due to possible flooding. Turfgrass growers were pumping water off of saturated fields. Fruit trees were in good condition due to no extreme temperature changes. Some counties were concerned with fruit trees breaking dormancy and insect problems. Eastern Washington's winter wheat was vulnerable because of little snow cover. Hay supplies were tight. Christmas tree growers cleaned debris from fields.

**FEBRUARY:** Hints of spring were seen across the state. Warmer weather and rain on the western side of the state created some flooding, but no crop damage was reported. Mountain snow packs were considered average. Little fieldwork was accomplished due to saturated fields or cold weather. Daffodils began to be hand harvested. Eastern Washington wheat growers were concerned about the cold weather not being severe enough to winterkill voluntary barley and wild oats. New seeding bluegrass was in good condition.

**MARCH:** The month brought more snow and colder temperatures across the state. Some areas were surprised to find significant accumulation of snow all the way up to the coastal waters. Agricultural producers complained that unseasonably high rainfall put them behind on field cultivation. Freezing and thawing each day may have caused damage to the roots of winter wheat plants. Christmas tree growers applied herbicides and fertilized trees. Livestock producers complained about elk damage to pastures and fences.

**APRIL:** Agricultural activities picked up as agricultural producers were busy with spring fieldwork. Water supplies were low and timely rainfall was needed to ensure proper crop development. Cool conditions slowed the growth and development of both winter wheat and spring planted cereals. Snow mold in the winter wheat crop required some reseeding. Asparagus harvest was underway. Pruning chores were completed and fruit trees were in bloom. Harvest of daffodils and tulips were completed. Hop growers began hop tying.

**MAY:** Cool weather across the state brought hail and rain to western Washington and snow to eastern Washington. The unusually low temperatures caused apple and pear damage in the central region. Field crops and vegetables remained about 2-3 weeks behind normal. Commercial strawberry growers reported late bloom on the Hood variety due to cold temperatures. Commercial blueberry growers continued to report extensive damage to plantations as a result of deer grazing. Dairywomen continued to apply liquid manure to forage fields. Crops showed signs of stress due to lack of moisture.

**JUNE:** Eastern Washington received rain the first part of the month, but it was not enough to keep moisture and crop conditions from being lowered. Warm temperatures and hot

winds continued to stress the cereal crops. Potato growers dealt with late blight. Most hay producers finished up with their first harvest. Cherry harvest began in Benton County, while the asparagus harvest wound down. Spokane County lost 100 percent of their cherry crop and 95 percent of their other soft fruit crop due to the frost received in April and May.

**JULY:** Warm weather persisted throughout the month. Whitman County reported a frost on July 5, but no crop damage was reported. Southwestern Washington's high temperatures hurt yield and quality for cereal crops in the critical filling stages. Some standing crops were destroyed by fire in several areas of the state, including Rock Lake, Walla Walla, and Chelan. Early potato varieties were harvested. Dairywomen continued making silage and baling hay under ideal conditions. Rain in Skagit County wreaked havoc on the strawberry quality and yields. Tomato harvests continued throughout the month.

**AUGUST:** Wheat and barley harvest began to wind down, with a few producers still harvesting in the later areas. Winter wheat seeding began in the earliest parts of the state. In central Washington, peaches, pears, hops, potatoes, sweet corn, onions, carrots, and early apples were harvested. Record high temperatures in the west greatly expedited corn tasseling but also resulted in some scorch damage to Nobel fir on Christmas tree farms. Livestock producers in eastern Washington still faced dry conditions for range and pastures but had an adequate hay supply for supplemental feeding programs.

**SEPTEMBER:** Spring and winter wheat harvest finished in the first half of the month. Seeding of winter wheat progressed rapidly with a pace well ahead of the five-year average. In western Washington, corn silage harvest was well underway with yields slightly lower than normal due to dry conditions. Livestock producers in Asotin and Garfield Counties applied to use the CRP grazing option, as there has been no fall regrowth of pastures. Many crops were harvested including apples, pears, potatoes, carrots, lima beans, hops, berries, peaches, nectarines, pears and sweet corn.

**OCTOBER:** Dry autumn weather prevailed across the state as producers continued to harvest grain corn, sweet corn, potatoes, and carrots. Cold temperatures and lack of precipitation hindered winter wheat seeding development. Dry conditions caused ranchers to haul water to cattle. Several counties utilized emergency CRP grazing programs. Fieldwork was able to continue due to the sunny autumn weather. Pastures and rangeland dried up due to the lack of moisture. Very cold temperatures quickly brought the growing season for most annual vegetables and flowers to an end. Apple and grape harvest continued.

**NOVEMBER:** Freezing temperatures were reported statewide the first week of November caused damage to potatoes, grapevines, and late variety apples. Grape harvest wrapped up, with some wineries taking advantage of the cold temperatures to make ice wine. Christmas tree growers began tree harvest under nearly ideal conditions. Precipitation in eastern Washington was in short supply but was enough to maintain winter wheat and subsoil conditions. Livestock operations continued to provide supplemental feed due to poor grazing conditions.

**DECEMBER:** During the second half of December, Washington experienced a return to near normal conditions with a significant accumulation of rain and snowfall. Most major rivers and streams were at record lows, which prevented any major flooding. Winter wheat condition improved with precipitation, but more was needed to advance beyond fair. Livestock were doing well in what started out as a mild winter. Christmas tree growers reported sales about the same as last year in both numbers of trees sold and price received. Buds were swelling on native Indian peach and red and blue elderberries.

## Weather Summary for Washington from January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002

| STATION                 | COUNTY       | ELEV.<br>FEET | AIR TEMPERATURE |    |     |     | PRECIPITATION |        |      | DAYS OF<br>32 COLD |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----|-----|-----|---------------|--------|------|--------------------|
|                         |              |               | HI              | LO | AVG | DFN | TOTAL         | DFN    | DAYS |                    |
| WEST                    |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Bellingham_Intl         | Whatcom      | 157           | 83              | 17 | 49  | -1  | 26.14         | -10.03 | 144  | 77                 |
| Everett                 | Snohomish    | 606           | 86              | 20 | 51  | 0   | 23.64         | -12.87 | 150  | 25                 |
| Hoquiam                 | Grays Harbor | 12            | 89              | 28 | 50  | -2  | 52.30         | -15.60 | 160  | 26                 |
| Kelso                   | Cowlitz      | 16            | 97              | 19 | 52  | +2  | 33.32         | -13.22 | 138  | 44                 |
| Olympia                 | Thurston     | 200           | 94              | 14 | 50  | +1  | 40.18         | -10.41 | 158  | 76                 |
| Seattle-Tacoma          | King         | 449           | 94              | 25 | 52  | -1  | 30.03         | -7.16  | 132  | 26                 |
| Shelton                 | Mason        | 279           | 95              | 17 | 50  | -3  | 49.05         | -15.82 | 141  | 74                 |
| Tacoma_WA_AP            | King         | 321           | 95              | 18 | 51  | -1  | 22.16         | -18.10 | 123  | 63                 |
| Vancouver               | Clark        | 25            | 101             | 20 | 54  | +3  | 31.66         | -9.64  | 136  | 42                 |
| CENTRAL                 |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Ellensburg              | Kittitas     | 1,765         | 101             | 8  | 49  | +2  | 7.06          | -1.88  | 81   | 150                |
| Omak                    | Okanogan     | 1,298         | 104             | 5  | 49  | +4  | 9.15          | -5.90  | 64   | 157                |
| Stampede Pass           | Kittitas     | 3,966         | 85              | 13 | 41  | +3  | 50.03         | -30.99 | 151  | 169                |
| Wenatchee               | Chelan       | 1,243         | 104             | 15 | 52  | +2  | 7.63          | -0.68  | 64   | 117                |
| Yakima AP               | Yakima       | 1,056         | 105             | 4  | 50  | +1  | 7.56          | -0.41  | 51   | 145                |
| NORTHEAST               |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Colville                | Stevens      | 1,876         | 105             | 8  | 50  | +4  | 15.40         | -5.82  | 70   | 143                |
| Deer Park               | Spokane      | 2,204         | 102             | 0  | 46  | -2  | 18.20         | -0.33  | 109  | 176                |
| Spokane AP              | Spokane      | 2,365         | 102             | 7  | 47  | +1  | 13.74         | -2.75  | 98   | 145                |
| EAST CENTRAL            |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Ephrata                 | Grant        | 1,273         | 107             | 8  | 52  | +1  | 5.02          | -2.21  | 48   | 129                |
| Moses Lake              | Grant        | 1,185         | 108             | 5  | 51  | 0   | 5.62          | -1.61  | 62   | 131                |
| Quincy                  | Grant        | 3,883         | 103             | 3  | 51  | +2  | 4.62          | -3.21  | 54   | 137                |
| Ritzville               | Adams        | 1,830         | 106             | 8  | 49  | +1  | 8.03          | -3.29  | 75   | 161                |
| SOUTHEAST               |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Hanford                 | Benton       | 731           | 112             | 7  | 54  | -2  | 6.00          | -0.49  | 47   | 107                |
| Pasco                   | Franklin     | 407           | 109             | 9  | 53  | -1  | 6.08          | -1.41  | 58   | 109                |
| Pullman                 | Whitman      | 2,552         | 103             | 8  | 47  | -1  | 14.00         | -7.09  | 103  | 142                |
| Walla Walla_Rgn         | Walla Walla  | 1,204         | 109             | 15 | 53  | -1  | 13.23         | -6.26  | 91   | 84                 |
| Whitman Mission         | Walla Walla  | 632           | 108             | 8  | 52  | 0   | 11.68         | -2.07  | 94   | 120                |
| IDAHO:                  |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| WESTERN IDAHO PANHANDLE |              |               |                 |    |     |     |               |        |      |                    |
| Coeur D'Alene           | Kootenai     | 2,319         | 100             | 5  | 47  | -2  | 18.90         | -7.05  | 98   | 138                |
| Lewiston ID             | Nez Perce    | 1,436         | 110             | 17 | 53  | +2  | 10.12         | -2.31  | 107  | 75                 |

Summary based on NWS data.

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.

Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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